

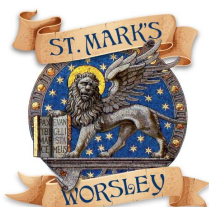
Francis LEVESON-GOWER



Born: 1 January 1800

Died: 18 February 1857

FRANCIS EGERTON
1st EARL OF ELLESMERE
FOUNDER and PATRON of St. MARK'S



FRANCIS LEVESON-GOWER (1800 - 1857)

Later: FRANCIS EGERTON, 1st Earl of Ellesmere
(Founder and Patron of the church)

A great deal of information about the founder of our church has been published, and, for that reason, there seems to be no need to give a full biography of his life and achievements in this publication. It remains, therefore, that only a copy of his obituary and a report of his funeral here at the church need to be printed.

His death on 18th February **1857** was well documented on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. **The Evening Star**, of Washington, D.C., announced on 10th March **1857**:

Lord Ellesmere, a distinguished English Peer, who is known in New York, having been Commissioner to our Crystal Palace, died on the 18th ult. He had considerable pretensions to authorship, poetry included. He inherited immense estates from the Duke of Bridgewater, and was known successively as Lord Francis Leveson Gower, Lord Francis Egerton, and Earl of Ellesmere. Two sons and two daughters and his wife came with him, when he paid us a visit, and made many friends.

The Alexandria Gazette of 11th March **1857** reported that "*The steamship Persia brings the sad news of the death of Francis Egerton, Earl of Ellesmere, whose visit to this country in the summer of **1853**, as one of the Queen's Commissioners, is fresh in the memory of our citizens. We believe that the first public speech he made in this country was made at the festival of the Boston school children, in Faneuil Hall, July 26, **1853**. The degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by Harvard College, at the Commencement in July*". Then on 19th March, **The Belmont Chronicle**, of Clairsville, Ohio, noted that the Earl had died "*after a long and painful illness*". It described him as being "*as distinguished a munificent patron of art as well as for his liberality of sentiment and his freedom from party fetters and rancor*".

The Times printed the following obituary, which is a succinct biography of this distinguished gentleman:

*The death of the **Earl of Ellesmere**, which occurred at Bridgewater-house yesterday after a very long and most painful illness, requires at our hands something more than a mere passing paragraph. **Francis Egerton**, first Earl of Ellesmere, of Ellesmere, county of Salop, and Viscount Brackley, of Brackley, county of Northampton, was born on the 1st day of January, **1800**. rings the sad news of the death of is father was George Granville, Marquis of Stafford, who afterwards was raised to the highest degree in the British Peerage, as Duke of Sutherland, whose father, the preceding Marquis, had married Louisa, daughter and eventually coheir of Scroope, first Duke of Bridgewater, to whose magnificent estates the Earl just deceased succeeded at the decease of his father in **1833**, when he assumed the surname and arms of Egerton alone in the place of his patronymic of Leveson Gower. He received his early education at Eton, whence he was in due time transferred to Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated B.A. in **1821**. In the following year Lord **Francis Leveson-Gower**, as he was then styled, was returned to Parliament as member for the pocket borough of Bletchingley, and commenced his public career in the Commons as a Liberal Conservative, and a warm supporter of Mr. Canning and his party. He had, however, at an earlier date displayed a taste for literature and the fine arts; and long before he had risked the broad glare of publication he had printed for private circulation some poems which were at least respectable. He then published a translation of Faust, accompanied by free and spirited versions of popular lyrics selected from the works of Goethe, Schiller, Burger, Salis, and Korner, which passed through several editions before he resolved to withdraw it from further circulation.*

In 1828 Lord Francis Leveson-Gower was sworn a member of His Majesty's Privy Council, and not long afterwards accompanied the late Marquis of Anglesey to Ireland as Chief Secretary. From July to November, 1830, he held the office of Secretary-at-War under the latter part of the Ministry of the Duke of Wellington. From 1826 to the dissolution in 1834 he sat for the county of Sutherland. In the December of the latter year he was chosen for the Southern Division of Lancashire, which he continued to represent down to his elevation to the Peerage, in 1846. On most important questions he carefully abstained from identifying himself with any faction or party. We ought, however, to mention that 20 years before Sir Robert Peel adopted the policy of free trade that measure had been strenuously advocated by Lord Francis Egerton in his place in Parliament; that he warmly supported the project of establishing the University of London; and that he actually carried on one occasion a motion for the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland.

In the year 1839 his Lordship was recommended by his medical advisers to spend a winter in the East, and he accordingly proceeded in his own yacht to the Mediterranean and the Holy Land. The results of his observations he afterwards gave to the world in the form of notes to his poem entitled the Pilgrimage, in which, having adopted the staff and sandals of a palmer, he gave a highly poetical picture of the various scenes and places which he visited in the course of his tour. This volume has been since reprinted, but it has been withheld from further circulation for many years. In the few years previous and subsequent to this date Lord Ellesmere published his Mediterranean Sketches, and printed for private circulation several poems, among which the best known are Donna Charitea; Blue Beard, a Parody; the Siege of Vienna, and the Paria; together with The Mill, and a Monody on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.

Lord Ellesmere had inherited the magnificent pictures collected by the great Duke of Bridgewater, and set a brilliant example to the possessors of similar collections by erecting a noble gallery at his town residence in Cleveland-gardens, to which the public have found ready admission.

Like most Ducal houses, the House of Sutherland is built of a series of successive stages, and part at least of its fortunes may be said to have commenced from a comparatively humble origin. Thomas Egerton, the illegitimate son of Sir Ralph Egerton, of Ridley, having been brought up to the bar, arrived at the highest honours of his profession, and filled during the reign of Elizabeth the posts of Solicitor and Attorney General, Master of the Rolls, and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. On the accession of King James Sir Thomas Egerton was appointed Lord High Chancellor of England, and was raised to the Peerage as Baron of Ellesmere; a few years later he was advanced to the Viscounty of Brackley. An Earldom had been already promised to him, when he died; strange to say, the King, though a Stuart, kept his word, and elevated his son and successor to the Earldom of Bridgewater. Not content with this mark of Royal favour, he appointed him Lord President of Wales, and of the Marches thereof, and it is to this appointment that the world of letters is indebted for Milton's immortal masque of Comus. His great-grandson Scroope, fourth Earl, who was created Duke of Bridgewater in 1720, left two sons, who successively inherited the Dukedom, and an only daughter, Louisa, grandmother, as we have already said, to the Peer so lately deceased. The third and last Duke of Bridgewater was the projector of the celebrated canal which still bears his name, and which realized a princely fortune for himself and his successors. The Dukedom became extinct on his death, in 1803, though the Earldom of Bridgewater continued for some 25 years longer in a distant branch of the family; and the magnificent property of that house was devised by his Grace to his nephew, George Granville, second Marquis of Stafford and first Duke of Sutherland,

with remainder to his second son, who, as our readers are aware, has been successively known as Lord Francis Leveson Gower, Lord Francis Egerton, and Earl of Ellesmere.

It only remains for us to add that the nobleman who has so recently passed away from among us married in 1822 Harriet Catherine, eldest daughter of Mr. Charles Greville and granddaughter of the late Duke of Portland, by whom he had issue two daughters, of whom the elder is married to the Hon. G. C. H. Byng, grandson of Field-Marshal the Earl of Strafford; and also five sons, the youngest of whom, Granville, was killed on the 27th of January, 1851, by a musket shot received accidentally at target practice on board one of Her Majesty's ships of the line. Of the other sons one is a captain in the navy, and another holds a captain's commission in the Grenadier Guards. His Lordship's eldest son, George Granville Francis, Viscount Brackley, who has now succeeded to the Peerage as second Earl of Ellesmere, was born in 1823, and married in 1846 the Lady Mary Louisa Campbell, daughter of the Earl of Cawdor, by whom he has two children, Charles Granville, born in 1847, and another son, born in 1854. His Lordship was elected for the Northern Division of Staffordshire at the general election of 1847, but accepted the Chiltern Hundreds in February, 1851, on the ground of ill health.

The deceased Earl was a Knight of the Order of the Garter, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Lancashire Yeomanry, a Deputy-Lieutenant for the county of Sutherland, a Vice-President of the Literary Fund, one of the Council of King's College, London, and a Trustee of the National Gallery. He was also appointed Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the County Palatine of Lancaster on the death of the late Earl of Sefton, in 1855.

The Manchester Guardian carried a full report of the funeral of the **Earl of Ellesmere**. It reported:

*The mortal remains of **Francis Egerton**, late Earl of Ellesmere, were yesterday interred in a vault in the burial ground of St. Mark's Church, Worsley, which stands near the principal lodge of Worsley Hall, the seat in the north of England of the Ellesmere family. As we announced would be the case, the funeral was not in any sense a public one; the family having, in reply to applications, intimated that any offers on the part of public bodies to join the procession must be declined. In addition to members of the family, and a few friends, the funeral procession comprised only the leading agents and tenantry connected with the extensive Bridgewater Trust estates. But several thousand persons from the neighbourhood, and from Manchester, congregated in the churchyard, and along the road from the lodge to the church; and altogether the assemblage showed the general and high respect in which the deceased nobleman was held. The road from the lodge to the vault was essentially kept by lines of workmen from the timber yard at Worsley (for the canal business), the estate yard, the coalmines, &c; all business on the estate being suspended for the day. The tenantry formed three or four abreast along the carriage drive to the hall. Precisely at noon, the cortège (all on foot) moved from the hall, in the following order:*

Two mutes

*About 120 of the tenantry, headed by Messrs. Harrison, Blair,
T.B. Crompton, R. Lansdale, John Cheetham, &c.*

Two mutes

Plume

The Revs. G. Whitlock, T. Morley, F. H. Coldwell, and William Burns.

*The Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, rector of Worsley, the officiating
minister, supported by the Churchwardens.*

The Hearse

Bearing on each side the Egerton Arms. emblazoned.

CHIEF MOURNERS

The Hon. Captain Frank Egerton, R.N.

*The Hon. Algernon Egerton, trustee and superintendent of the
Bridgewater Trust.*

*The Hon. Captain Arthur Egerton (Fusiliers); three of the sons
of the deceased.*

The Duke of Sutherland; brother.

The Hon. G. Byng, M.P., son-in-law.

The Marquis of Westminster; brother-in-law.

The Marquis of Stafford; nephew, and executor.

Lord E. Howard; nephew.

Lord Grosvenor; nephew

The Hon. Algernon Greville; brother-in-law.

The Hon. H. Greville; brother-in-law.

The Earl Cawdor; father of the present Countess of Ellesmere.

Viscount Emlyn, M.P.; brother of the Countess.

Lord Robert Grosvenor, M.P.

The Earl of Clanwilliam; of the Bridgewater Trust.

George Loch, Esq; one of the executors.

- Du Cane, Esq. of London, the solicitor.

Dr. Kingsley, London, the resident physician.

Peter Rasbotham, Esq. the private secretary.

Fereday Smith, Esq. general manager and principal agent, of the Bridgewater Trust

R. Smith, Esq. of Dudley.

Members of the Household.

*Principal Agents, about 70 in number, and including the following: - Mr. J.
Pendlebury, of the Duke's Dock, Liverpool; Mr. G. Marsden, Old Quay; Mr. C. Ripon,
Cashier; Mr. Mitchell, of Warrington, &c.*

From the shortness of the distance, the head of the procession soon reached the main entrance at the west end of St. Mark's; and the tenantry then formed on each side of the path, from the gate to the entrance. The Rev. St. Vincent Beechey took the accustomed place in advance of the coffin, and commenced reading the burial service; and the mourners and friends having entered the church, the tenants followed. The nave had been reserved for this purpose, but the side aisles were crowded long before, a large proportion of those present being ladies. Upon the completion of that portion of the service appointed to be read in the church, the procession was again formed, and quitted the building through the south door and porch; the path to the vault (which is situated at the south-east angle) being lined by the tenantry. The coffin was soon lowered; and after the relatives had retired, the tenants, &c. pressed forward to gaze into the vault. It was some hours before all the spectators had quitted the churchyard. In the interior of the church, the pulpit and reading desk were hung with crape, as was also the front of the family pew; but otherwise no change was made.

The present Earl of Ellesmere was unable, from ill health, to attend the funeral of his father. His lordship left Bridgewater House on Wednesday (the day after the removal of the body), for his seat, Bowood, Surrey.

The hearse (the only vehicle in the procession) bore on each side the Egerton arms, richly emblazoned, together with the insignia of the Garter. The family arms are as follows: Ar. a lion ramp. gu. between three pheons sa. Crest - on a chapeau, gu. turned

up erm. a lion ramp. of the first, supporting an arrow erect or , headed and feathered ar. Supporters - On the dexter side a horse ar. gorged with a ducal coronet or; on the sinister a griffin segreant ar. gorged with a ducal coronet or, beaked and legged of the last. Motto - "Sic Donec." The pall also bore the arms ; and upon the sides of the coffin, there was in brass, at different points, a coronet. The coffin, of oak, was simple in its fittings; and it bore a bras plate, with the following inscription:

Francis Egerton, Earl of Ellesmere, K.G.; born 1st January, 1800; died, 18th February, 1857.

The vault, which as we have said, is at the south-east angle of the church, is very capacious, and 14ft. deep. Closely adjoining it, and within the walls of the church, there is a larger family vault, which was constructed while the church was being erected. We are not aware whether it is intended to remove the body of the late earl into this vault, but we understand that this could be done easily hereafter, if desired, as there would be little work necessary, beyond the removal of a portion of the wall, so as to form a connection.

During the mournful ceremony, the ground was kept by 36 constables, under Mr. Superintendent Macdonald, of the Manchester Division.

